

Massachusetts Water Resources Commission

Meeting Minutes for January 9, 1997

Commission Members in Attendance:

Mark P. Smith	Designee, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Peter C. Webber	Commissioner, Department of Environmental Management
Arlene O'Donnell	Designee, Department of Environmental Protection
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, Department of Housing and Community Development
Joseph McGinn	Designee, Metropolitan District Commission
Lee Corte-Real	Designee, Department of Food and Agriculture
Jane Mead	Designee, Coastal Zone Management (non-voting)
Bob Zimmerman	Public Member
Gary Clayton	Public Member
Frank Veale	Public Member
Paul Bucknam	Public Member

Others in Attendance:

Vicki Gartland	OWR/DEM
Lou Wagner	Massachusetts Audubon Society
Peter Phippen	OWR/DEM
Steve Asen	OWR/DEM
Stephen Johnson	Sudbury Valley Trustees
Mike Gildesgame	OWR/DEM
Richard Thibedeau	DEM
Mike Norris	U.S. Geological Survey
Thomas Knowlton	Salem Beverly Water Board
Kerry Mackin	Executive Director, Ipswich River Watershed Assoc.
Duane LeVangie	DEP
John Gregoire	MWRA/Waterworks Division
Cindy DelPapa	DFWELE/Riverways
Karen Pelto	DFWELE/Riverways
Joan Kimball	DFWELE/Riverways
Martin Pillsbury	MAPC

Agenda Item #1: Introduction of Mark Smith

Gildesgame introduced and welcomed Mark Smith, the new Director of Policy and Planning for Water at EOEA and Executive Director of the Commission. Smith spoke of his most recent job as Project Manager for EPA's Casco Bay Estuary Project in Maine. Mark explained that he started the job on January 5th and hoped to meet personally with every Commission member to discuss their concerns and issues.

Agenda Item #2: Adoption of the Minutes of December 12, 1996 meeting

A motion was made by Corte-Real and seconded by Zimmerman to

ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 12, 1996.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Item #3: Ipswich River Basin Team Activity

Gildesgame noted that in accord with WRC requests at the previous meeting, staff was arranging for basin-wide background and EOEA basin team input to upcoming discussions of requests for increased community water withdrawals. As Wenham's request will be brought to the Commission next month, members of the Ipswich basin team were requested to provide information on team and other activities in the Ipswich River basin.

Mackin, passed out I.R.W.A. newsletters and a write-up on low flow and water withdrawals in the Ipswich River basin. Mackin explained that the Ipswich River experiences very low flows, especially in the summer when water withdrawals and transfers exceed the basin's capacity. A major reason for this low flow is because 80% of the permitted municipal water withdrawals is transferred out of basin. Mackin would like DEP to re-examine water withdrawals in the basin and come up with a way to reduce allocations to communities.

Mackin reviewed the Task Force organized from the EOEA Ipswich Basin Team. The task force, an ad-hoc group, has come up with goals and objectives for a work plan. The task force will be doing various water conservation and education programs to help communities and to come up with a system to address allocation of water in the future. There is also a Master Plan Committee to look at future water supply sources as well as a Science/Data Committee to develop the basic understanding of the basin's hydrology.

Phippen discussed the Science/Data Committee and its objective to prepare a management plan for the basin. The committee needs to know the natural flow of the river and will look at various models that can determine this. The cost of paying for the model will be explored by the Committee. They might request the legislature for assistance in meeting the cost of a basin model. Once a model is developed, the management plan can set up flow triggers, carry out cost/benefit analyses on rehabilitating fisheries/wetlands, and set the direction of future water supply sources. Zimmerman suggested that the WRC should focus on ways to prevent automatic approval of environmentally unsound water supply sources which have a large investment of money. He stated that the way the laws are being operated leads to a situation where we will run out of water, resulting in desertification. He suggested that the Charles River Watershed Association should present what their models have come up in the Charles to help address the problems in the Ipswich basin. Mackin welcomed the input.

Levangie stated that DEP completed the 5 year review for Water Management Act permits in the Ipswich basin. DEP decided not to use the allocation amounts for 1996 for the communities that have 20 year Water Management Act permits. DEP will keep the permit volumes at the 1991 levels since all the communities are within their 1991 permit amounts.

There was further discussion that the Commission should review the existing water needs forecast methodology, water conservation report cards and cumulative impacts on water withdrawal in a basin.

| Agenda Item #4: Review 1996 Action Items and Discussion of Items for 1997

Gildesgame discussed the activities and policy decisions the WRC reviewed and voted on in 1996. The Commission also discussed the memo by Thibedeau concerning policy topics for 1997 WRC consideration. Members discussed topics they felt should be addressed in the coming year. Smith and Gildesgame will revise the memo and will include the ideas stated by the Commission members.

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meeting minutes approved 2/13/97

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